

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-11. (canceled)

12. (New) A grate furnace, comprising:

a grate including grate steps, every second one of said grate steps along a longitudinal direction of said grate is movable in a stoking movement direction, wherein others of said grate steps between said every second one of said grate steps are stationary;

drive devices arranged in an area of an underblast chamber under said grate for moving said moveable grate steps; and

a housing for protecting said drive devices arranged between said drive devices and said grate, said housing comprising a first longitudinal section and a second longitudinal section, said first longitudinal section being enclosed in the underblast chamber and said second longitudinal section being partially enclosed in the underblast chamber and being open toward a bottom such that said second longitudinal area is accessible from underneath.

13. (New) The grate furnace of claim 12, wherein said housing comprises a separate housing chamber for each of said drive devices arranged under said grate.

14. (New) The grate furnace of claim 13, wherein each said separate housing chambers comprises thermal insulation.

15. (New) The grate furnace of claim 13, wherein each said separate housing chambers receives forced ventilation.

16. (New) The grate furnace of claim 12, wherein said underblast chamber supplies primary air to said grate in a flow direction, said housing being streamlined relative to said flow direction.

17. (New) The grate of claim 13, wherein said grate comprises a grate inclination and said housing chambers are staggered relative to each other relative to said grate inclination.

18. (New) The grate of claim 12, wherein each of said drive devices is connected to two of said moveable grate steps.

19. (New) The grate of claim 12, wherein each of said drive devices comprises at least one hydraulic cylinder/piston unit including a piston rod, a push rod connected to said piston rod, and a carriage connected to at least one moveable grate step, wherein said push rod is sealingly guided through a wall of said housing.

20. (New) The grate furnace of claim 19, wherein said piston rod is connected to said push rod by an articulation.

21. (New) The grate furnace of claim 19, wherein said each of said drive devices further comprises guide tracks running parallel to said stoking movement direction for guiding said carriage, said housing comprising separate housing chambers for each of said drive devices, and said guide tracks being arranged above said housing chamber of an adjacent one of said drive devices.

22. (New) The grate furnace of claim 13, wherein said housing is connected to the underblast chamber by an opening, said housing comprising a flap for selectively closing said opening.

23. (new) The grate furnace of claim 13, further comprising a plurality of underblast chambers and a housing corresponding to each of said underblast chambers, wherein each housing corresponding to one of said drive devices.

24. (new) The grate furnace of claim 23, wherein each of said housings comprise a first longitudinal section and a second longitudinal section, said first longitudinal section being enclosed in a respective one of said underblast chambers and said second longitudinal section being partially enclosed in said respective one of said underblast chambers and being open toward a bottom such that said second longitudinal area is accessible from underneath.